Two (further) Example Sections

Plain Text

Featuring a plain English translation of the Shakespeare text.

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THE TEMPEST

(The Condensed Story)

Prospero is the rightful Duke of Milan, but his treacherous brother Antonio, helped by the King of Naples, deposes Prospero and casts him and his three-year-old daughter Miranda adrift in a small boat, expecting them to drown. The boat, however, has been secretly equipped with food, water, a great many books and survival equipment by Gonzalo, the king’s advisor – a kind and optimistic man. Prospero and Miranda survive and become marooned on a remote island. Over the next twelve years, Prospero perfects his skills as a sorcerer, through his great learning and his library of books. He rescues Ariel, an “airy spirit”, from a tree and is reluctantly served by Ariel from then on. The island is also inhabited by Caliban, son of Sycorax, an Algerian witch who was exiled to the island but died before Prospero’s arrival and who was responsible for imprisoning Ariel in the tree. Caliban is a deformed monster and he’s initially adopted and raised by Prospero, teaching Prospero and Miranda how to survive, while they teach him astronomy and language. However, Caliban is enslaved by Prospero after he [Caliban] tries to force himself upon Miranda. After this, Caliban resents Prospero, as he believes the island belongs to him.

Twelve years have passed when the play opens. A ship carrying Antonio back from Tunis, along with the King of Naples, his son Ferdinand and brother Sebastian and Gonzalo (the king’s advisor) is caught in a terrible storm. This Tempest (hence the name of the play) has been conjured up by Prospero and Ariel to wreck the ship as it passes close to their island. The ‘survivors’ of the conjured storm come ashore on the island and are separated into three groups by Prospero’s spells. Three plots then alternate through the play. In the first, Caliban forms an alliance with Stephano and Trinculo, two drunken crew members, who Caliban believes have come from the moon, and they plot to overthrow Prospero. In the second, Prospero works to establish a romantic relationship between Ferdinand and Miranda and the couple fall in love. Prospero compels Ferdinand to become his servant to prove his affection for Miranda. In the third plot, Antonio and Sebastian conspire to kill the King of Naples and his advisor Gonzalo, so that Sebastian can become king.

Prospero, helped by Ariel, thwarts the plots and manipulates the course of his enemies’ paths through the island, drawing them closer and closer to him. In conclusion, all the characters are brought before Prospero, who warns them not to get involved in betrayal in future, then forgives them. The king is repentant for his part in the original plot against Prospero and welcomes the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda – though Antonio and Sebastian never actually say they’re sorry for their ‘sins’. The ship has been lying in a cove during this time, with the sailors ‘sleeping’. Prospero now brings the ship’s Master and Boatswain ashore, to ensure they all get back safely to Italy, where Ferdinand and Miranda will be married and Prospero will retire to his Dukedom of Milan. Prospero sets Ariel free at the end to “follow Summer merrily” and Caliban is the only one who remains behind on the island. In an epilogue, Prospero invites the audience to set him free from his “bands” [bonds] with applause.
**SECTION 1**

*Act 3, Scene 2*

**Background**

The island in *The Tempest* is ostensibly located in the Mediterranean, but has features of the Caribbean or South America and suggests a new and unfamiliar world to early 17th century theatregoers – a world of imagination and magical rejuvenation, transformation and restoration. The island almost seems alive with magic and this setting is utilised to explore themes ranging from social order, to the supernatural, to the conflict between ‘civilised’ man and nature.

Caliban is a “deformed savage” – the son of Sycorax, an Algerian witch who was exiled to the island years before and is now dead. Caliban was educated by Prospero and Miranda when they arrived on the island, but he tried to rape Miranda and has since been treated as a slave by Prospero. As he was on the island first, Caliban believes the island belongs to him. When Stephano and Trinculo come ashore from the ship, he believes Stephano is the ‘Man in the Moon’ and treats him like a god, especially when Stephano gives him wine – “celestial liquor” – to drink. Caliban asks Stephano to kill Prospero for him, but he takes a dislike to Trinculo.

Caliban is, in many ways, a sympathetic character, who questions the value of civilisation as it is presented to him – a character who has been displaced from the territory that was his in the first place, thus representing many indigenous peoples who were displaced by expanding empires during this great age of discovery.

Stephano and Trinculo depict exploitation at its worst in their treatment of Caliban, getting him drunk and using him to try to gain control of the island. This can also be taken to represent the European colonists of the New World, which was beginning to become more accessible when the play was written – Miranda herself first coins the phrase “brave new world”.

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I'm brave enough to fight a policeman. If you perverted fish, no coward has ever drank as much as I have to. Do you tell such monstrous lies because you're half-fish and half-monster?

Lying, ignorant monster!

Look how he's making fun of me! Don't let him do it, lord!

"Lord!" he calls you! What an idiot that monster is.

There he goes again! Bite him to death. Please!

Keep a civil tongue in your head, Trinculo.

If you go against us, you'll be hung from the next tree.

The poor monster's my subject and I won't have him insulted.

Thank you, noble lord. Will you listen to the request I made earlier?

As I said, I'm the slave of a tyrant - a bascian, who tricked me and cheated me out of this island.

Indeed I will. Rebel and ask me again. I'll sound, and so will Trinculo.
“YOU'RE THE Liar! YOU JOKING MONKEY! I wish my brave master would kill you! I don't lie!”

TRINCULO, IF YOU INTERRUPT HIM AGAIN, I SWEAR I'LL KNOCK YOUR TEETH OUT!

STAY QUIET, THEN.

GO ON.

“I SAW NOTHING.”

“AS I WAS SAYING...”

“HE TRICKED ME OUT OF THIS ISLAND BY MAGIC.

“I KNOW YOUR GREATNESS IS BRAVE ENOUGH TO TAKE REVENGE...”

“-- THAT FOOL ISN'T!”

“THAT'S FOR SURE.”

“YOU'LL BE KING OF THE ISLAND AND I'LL SERVE YOU.”

“WHAT SORT OF A PIECE OF IDIOT ARE YOU? YOU ROTTEN CAD!”

“PLEASE BEAT HIM UP AND TAKE THE BOTTLE FROM HIM. THEN HE'LL HAVE NOTHING TO DRINK BUT SEA-WATER...”

“-- BECAUSE I WONT SHOW HIM WHERE THE SPRING WATER IS.”

“CAREFUL, TRINCULO. IF YOU INTERRUPT THE MONSTER WITH ONE MORE WORD, I'LL loose MY PATIENCE AND BEAT YOU LIKE A PIECE OF DEAD FISH.”

“WHY WHAT DID I DO? I DID NOTHING, I'LL MOVE AWAY.”

“DON'T YOU CALL HIM A Liar!”

“DO I? TAKING THAT!”
I didn’t call you a liar. Are you crazy, and hearing things too?

CURSE THIS WINE!
This is what comes from drinking too much.
A plague on your monster and to hell with your fists!

HA, HA, HA!

Now, get on with your story...

As I was saying, he usually sleeps in the afternoon.
Take his magic books first, then you can brain him, or bash his head in with a log, or stab him in the guts with a stake, or cut his throat with your knife.
Remember to take his books first. He’s nothing without them – he can’t command a single spirit. The spirits hate him just as much as I do.
Burn only his books.
He has very nice instruments: as he calls them, which will adorn his house, when he gets one.

Please, stand further away.
Beat him more. After a while, I’ll beat him too.

Carry on.

FURTHER!

The most important thing to consider is how beautiful his daughter is.
He himself says she’s without equal.
The only woman I’ve seen, like her and my mother, Sycorax – but there’s no comparison between them.

Is she really that good?

Yes, lord; she’ll look great in your bed, and produce some fine children for you.

Alright, Monster. I’ll kill the man, his daughter and I will be king and queen. God save us! You and Trinculo will be governors.
DEAD MEN PAY THEIR DEBTS,
I CHALLENGE YOU!

GOD HELP US.
ARE YOU AFRAID?

NO, MONSTER,
NOT ME.

DON'T BE AFRAID,
THIS ISLAND'S FULL OF NOISES,
NICE SOUNDS AND MELODIES
THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY AND
WON'T HURT YOU.

SOMETIMES I HEAR A
THOUSAND STRINGED INSTRUMENTS
AND SOMETIMES VOICES THAT CAN SEND
ME INTO A TRANCE, EVEN IF
I'M NOT SLEEPY...

...AND I DREAM OF
CLOUDS OPENING UP AND DROPPING
BEAUTIFUL THINGS DOWN ON ME
AND WHEN I WAKE, I CRY TO
DREAM AGAIN.

THIS WILL BE A WONDERFUL
KNOWLEDGE FOR ME,
WHERE I CAN HAVE MY
MUSIC FOR FREE.

THE SOUND IS GONE AWAY,
LET'S FOLLOW IT, THEN WE'LL
DO WHAT WE HAVE TO.

LEAD THE WAY,
MONSTER.
I WISH I COULD
SEE THE MUSICIAN
HE'S GOOD.

WHEN YOU KILL
PROSPERO,

THAT'LL BE
SOON ENOUGH,
I REMEMBER
THE PLAN.

AFTER YOU,
STEPHANO - I'LL
FOLLOW.
SECTION 2
Act 4, Scene 1, lines 139 to 262

Background

Prospero rules the island as magician-king, using Ariel, other spirits and his white magic. His assumption of god-like power is arrogant, even blasphemous. He must overcome his vengeful feelings against those who wronged him. He may seem patriarchal, colonial and even sexist to modern audiences but, in the end, he decides to forgive those who harmed him and give up his magic and his self-importance.

Prior to the section illustrated here, Prospero has told Ferdinand that he has passed all his [Prospero’s] trials and has proved his love for Miranda. Prospero has offered his daughter in marriage to Ferdinand. However, Prospero has also warned against pre-marital sex and Ferdinand agrees not to be ruled by lust.

Ariel has arrived to perform his last service, a ceremonial spirit-wedding, before Prospero keeps his promise to set him free. Ariel arranges for Spirits to masquerade as Roman and Greek Goddesses and he conjures up Nymphs and Reapers to dance for the couple and celebrate their “true love”.

The mood changes when Prospero remembers Caliban’s plot to kill him.
I've forgotten about Caliban and his associates plot to kill me. The moment they planned to act is almost here.

Well done! No more, now, go!

It's strange to see your father so upset.

I've never seen him this angry before.

And, just like the insubstantial nature of what you've seen, everything - the imposing towers, the beautiful palaces, the austere temples, the entire earth itself and all it represents - will fade away and disappear, leaving nothing behind.

You look as if something's bothering you, my son. Cheer up.

Our celebrations are over now. The participants, as I said, were all spirits and have vanished into thin air.

We are such stuff as dreams are made on - and our little lives end with sleep.
I'M UPSET, SIR. PLEASE BEAR WITH ME. MY OLD BRAIN IS TROUBLED. DON'T BE DISTURBED BY THIS. YOU CAN GO TO MY LIVING QUARTERS AND REST, IF YOU LIKE. I'LL GO FOR A WALK TO CALM MY AGITATED MIND.

WE HOPE YOU FEEL BETTER SOON.

I'M CALLING YOU IN MY MIND'S ARMS... COME TO ME.

I OBEY YOUR MIND. WHAT DO YOU WANT?

SPIRIT, WE HAVE TO GET READY TO MEET CALIBAN. YES, MASTER.

I THOUGHT OF TELLING YOU ABOUT CALIBAN IN THE CELEBRATIONS, BUT I WAS AFRAID OF OFFENDING YOU.

TELL ME AGAIN, WHERE DID YOU LEAVE THAT RASBLE?

I TOLD YOU FIRST, THEY WERE DRINKING HEAVILY. -- SO PUFFED UP WITH FALSE COURAGE THAT THEY WERE EVEN AMBUSHED AT THE AIR FOR BLOWING IN THEIR FACES AND AT THE GROUND FOR TOUCHING THEIR FEET. BUT THEY KEPT THEIR PLAN FORMED IN MIND.
THEN I BEAT MY PRAISAN, AT WHICH POINT THEY LISTENED AND LOOKED AND SHIFTED, SEARCHING FOR THE SOURCE OF MY MUSIC.

I ENCOUNTERED THEM SO MUCH THAT THEY FOLLOWED ME THROUGH BRUSHES, MUZZLE BUSHES, SHARP BONES AND THORNS, THAT BURRS AT THEIR SKIN.

IN THE END I LEFT THEM IN THE STORM AT THE OTHER SIDE OF YOUR LIVING QUARTERS, WITH THEIR CRUEL WATER UP TO THEIR CHEEWS.

YOU’VE DONE WELL, ARE.

SHAHN INVISIBLE FOR NOW. SO BRING THE RENCY CLOTHES FROM MY HOUSE. TO USE AS BAIT TO CATCH THESE THIEVES.

I’M GOING. THAT CALIBAN’S A BORN DEVIL AND HE’LL NEVER BE ANYTHING ELSE. I WASTED MY TIME TRYING TO HELP HIM, AS HE GETS CLOSER. HE GETS ANGER. IN BOTH MIND AND BODY. I’LL TORMENT THEM ALL AND MAKE THEM WORRY.

HERE, HANG THEM ON THIS VINE.

PLEASE WALK SOFTLY SO THAT NOT EVEN A HOLE CAN HEAR YOU. WE’RE CLOSE TO WHERE HE LIVES.

MONSTER, THAT SPIRIT YOU SAW HARMLESS HAS BEEN PLAYING TRICKS ON US.

MONSTER, I SMELL OF HORSE-URINE, WHICH I SAW AGREE WITH MY NOSE.
MINE TOO! ARE YOU LISTENING, MONSTER? IF YOU MAKE ME ANGRY, I'LL — YOU'LL BE A DEAD MONSTER!

AND THAT'S ADDING INSULT TO INJURY, MONSTER!

PLEASE, LORD, BEAR WITH ME. BE PATIENT AND IT WILL ALL BE WORTH YOUR WHILE. GO, SPEAK QUIETLY — BE AS SILENT AS MIDNIGHT FOR NOW.

YES, BUT WE LOST OUR BOTTLES IN THE SWAMP.

I'LL GET MY BOTTLE BACK. IF I HAVE TO GO IN OVER MY EARS TO DO IT!

PLEASE, KING, BE QUIET! HERE'S THE ENTRANCE TO HIS LIVING QUARTERS. GO IN SILENTLY AND DO THE DEED THAT WILL MAKE THE ISLAND YOURS, FOREVER — AND ME, CALIBAN, YOUR WORSHIPFUL FOOT-LICKER.

HEY, MONSTER, WE KNOW WHAT'S WORTHLESS AND WHAT'S NOT, KING STEPHANO — LET IT GO, TRENTO. IT'S MINE!

POINT THE WAY, I'M READY TO DO IT.

KING STEPHANO! KING STEPHANO! LOOK AT THE FABULOUS CLOTHES HERE!

KING STEPHANO! \-You fool! They're worthless. YOUR HIGHNESS CAN HAVE IT!
This sick should die of disease! Why are you going crazy over these bees? Leave them and kill Prospero first! If he wakes, he'll cover us with bristles and turn us into strange things.

---

Here's something for you. It will be rewarded while I'm king of the country. That's a great line --

---

I'll have nothing to do with it! We'll miss our chance and be turned into wild beasts or apes with low foreheads.
GET WORKING, MONSTER!
HELP US CARRY THESE CLOTHES BACK TO THE BARREL OF WINE
OR I’LL KICK YOU OUT OF MY KINGDOM.
GO ON, CARRY THIS!

AND THIS!

AY, AND THIS!

FURY! THERE, TYRANT, LISTEN, LISTEN!

AND ORDER MY GOBLINS TO WAGE THEIR BONES TWIST AND GRIND — AND TO GIVE THEM MUSCLE CRAMPS ALL OVER,
AND COVER THEM WITH BRUISES SO THAT THEY’RE MORE BLOTCHED THAN A LEOPARD!

HUNT THEM WELL.
ALL MY ENEMIES ARE AT MY MERCY NOW.

MY WORK WILL COME TO AN END SOON AND I’LL SET YOU FREE.
JUST DO WHAT I ASK FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER.

LISTEN, THEY’RE NOWLING!
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADRIAN</strong></td>
<td><em>A Lord</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALONSO</strong></td>
<td><em>King of Naples</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The father of Ferdinand, Alonso originally helped Antonio to oust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prospero from Milan. He regrets this now, and wants to make up with him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANTONIO</strong></td>
<td><em>Prospero’s brother</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Antonio is Prospero’s wicked brother. Twelve years before the play starts,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Antonio betrayed Prospero, and stole his dukedom. His hunger for power</td>
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<td></td>
<td>continues even after he is shipwrecked on the island, persuading</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sebastian to help him to kill Alonso. Despite all that, Prospero</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>forgives Antonio at the end of the play.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ARIEL</strong></td>
<td><em>An Airy Spirit</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prospero controls a number of spirits, but Ariel is the most powerful – and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mischievous. The witch Sycorax (Caliban’s mother) trapped Ariel within a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tree; from where he was rescued by Prospero. From that moment on,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prospero had complete control over Ariel, and it is Ariel who carries out</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>the tasks to bring Prospero’s plans to fruition.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BOATSWAIN</strong></td>
<td><em>of the ship</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This coarse character appears at the start and end of the play. He remains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>calm and competent in the storm, much to the anger of the other noblemen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CALIBAN</strong></td>
<td><em>A Deformed Savage</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caliban is the son of the deceased witch Sycorax. Like Ariel, he is one of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prospero’s servants, but he is unhappy with that situation because he</td>
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<td></td>
<td>believes that the island is his – and that Prospero stole it from him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FERDINAND</strong></td>
<td>The King’s Son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRANCISCO</strong></td>
<td>A Lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GONZALO</strong></td>
<td>A Counsellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MIRANDA</strong></td>
<td>Prospero’s daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROSPERO</strong></td>
<td>Duke of Milan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEBASTIAN</strong></td>
<td>The king’s brother</td>
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**BACKGROUND TO THE PLAY**

_The Tempest_ is widely regarded as the last play that Shakespeare wrote on his own [there were some later collaborations]. Although listed as a comedy in the first Folio, many modern editors have relabelled it as a romance.

At the time it was written, it did not attract a significant amount of attention and was, to some extent, ignored. However, in the 20th century, the play received a sweeping re-appraisal by critics and scholars and it is now considered to be one of Shakespeare’s greatest works.

Whether Shakespeare mastered the colonial debate he introduces in _The Tempest_ or not is open to argument – and it may very well be just romantic wishful-thinking to associate his and Prospero’s farewell to their respective art forms – nevertheless, it’s an irresistible idea because, in the end, we are greatly moved by the sense of completion and humility and the combination of joyful triumph and calm resignation contained in the valedictory epilogue.